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ABSTRACT

A quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis were made of the "Washington Post," the "New York Times," "Newsweek," and "Time" from November 4, 1980, through January 20, 1981, to examine President-elect Reagan's transition period in order to determine his impression management--the way he defined himself and his relationships with other governmental actors and with the public at large--during that period. The analyses revealed that Reagan was generally successful in managing his persona. However, although he managed to avoid violations of type, he ran into trouble by pursuing a theory of silence and withdrawing from active participation in the Washington scene. But, the Reagan team recognized their mistakes and eventually pursued an adaptive strategy that for the most part corrected the Reagan image problem. (Author/HOD)

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Impression Management During the Reagan Transition

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by

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ABSTRACT

Even though the traditional American Politics literature virtually ignores the presidential transition period and its relationship to the political future of the president-elect, this research suggests that the transition period must be examined, for it is here that the successful presidential candidate evolves into a governing politician. The choices made during the transition will reverberate throughout the remainder of the president's political career.

Through impression management, the president-elect seeks to define himself and his relationships with other governmental actors and with the public at large. This study looks at impression management during the Reagan Transition.

The study is based on a quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis of the transition coverage provided by The Washington Post, The New York Times, Newsweek, and Time from November 4, 1980 through January 20, 1981.

Reagan was generally successful in managing his persona. However, although he managed to avoid violations of type, he ran into trouble by pursuing a theory of silence and withdrawing from active participation in the Washington scene. But, the Reagan team recognized their mistakes and eventually pursued an adaptive strategy that for the most part corrected the Reagan image problem.

Impression Management During the Reagan Transition

"Only in recent times has the political community identified presidential transitions as a distinctive set of phenomena to be named, analyzed, and affected by purposeful effort."[1] This study is an examination of one such purposeful activity of the Reagan transition: impression management.

For the purposes of this work, a presidential transition period will be discussed as the time between the election and the inaugural. During a transition period, an old administration is winding down, and a new one is being born. A winning campaign organization must be turned into a successful governing organization, and similarly, a winning presidential candidate must turn miraculously into an effective president. The drama of an election campaign is evolving into the drama of governing.[2] The president-elect must evolve from partisan contender to winner to public servant.

This political evolution has been described negatively in various ways: "the weakest hour of American democracy"[3]; a "governing hiatus"[4]; or even more dramatically "the crisis of transition."[5] The common denominator of these symbolic labels is the theme of uncertainty and anxiety.[6]

This uncertainty is not just the uncertainty brought from the transference of the reins of power from the hands of one group to another, but rather, it is also the uncertainty about the president-elect himself. Is the president-elect really of presidential cloth?

A president-elect must attempt to define a situation in which the only certainty is uncertainty. Long has labeled this task of "defining the

situation" as one of "uncertainty absorption"[7] The president-elect must make himself and the political situation "understandable"[8] This task of "defining the situation" is the process of the president-elect defining himself and his relationships with other governmental actors and with the public at large. Thus the president-elect must "conduct himself with awareness of the image of the man-in-action he is creating in the public mind, and its portent for his postinaugural success."[9] The public image of the president-elect is the key to what he should do and can do as president[10] This purposive process of "defining the situation" is the art of impression management.[11]

Impression management is the processual advocacy of realities that has been purposefully designed to create a desired "definition of the situation." Hall writes:

> Impression management means that control over the conduct of others for one's own interest is achieved by influencing the definition of the situation in which all are involved. This is accomplished by acting in such a way that an image is created of the actor (and related objects) that lead others to voluntarily act as the actor wishes them to act.[12]

Impression management has two dimensions. First, the "impression manager" uses the power of information flow control.[13] The information presented to the audience (i.e., media personnel, crowd, staff, etc.) are choices of the "impression manager." Secondly, the "impression manager" uses a variety of symbolic devices to mobilize support for his definiton of the situation. Persona is the term used for what the "impression manager"

wishes to portray.[14]

It is important to remember that the president-as-impression-manager is not a hypodermic needle concept of persuasion. The ultimate "definition of the situation" is the joint action, intersubjective reality of the participants, (i.e., the citizens, the mass media, other governmental actors, etc.). The "defintion of the situation" is a negotiated order. Impression management merely attempts to study and explain means used by political leaders to enter and engage in the negtotiation process, the drama known as politics.

The peoples' "impression" of the president depends not only on his present rhetoric, but also on his past and his future rhetoric and their perceptions of it.[15] The peoples' impression of the president also depends on their present experiences, their past experiences, and their expectations for the future. Thus, a president must be aware not only of his role performance (his ability to act) but also his public's role expectations (how they want him to act).

Lee, Johnson, and Beld found that Carter portrayed three persona during his transition period.[16] These persona are very similar to "ideal types" or "ideal roles" which Nimmo and Savage found in people's preferences for presidential behavior.[17] Other researchers have found similar expectations of behavior or actual behavior on the part of leaders.[18]

Robert Denton in The Symoblic Dimensions of the American Presidency develops a communication model of presidential power that builds upon these "types or roles" which Denton calls "orientations to power." In this model, Denton describes two continuum which operate in the presidential power matrix. The authority-influence continuum suggests the potential

basis of presidential power.[19] The "authority" component refers to the legalistic or constitutional basis for presidential power. The "influence" component refers to the persuasive, bargaining skills of the president that also serve as a basis for presidential power. The openness-secrecy continuum refers to a president's policy on information control.[20] Denton places the two continuum in an intersecting position, and he has, thus, established four quadrants which he says depict four orientations to power.[21]

FIGURE 1

DENTON'S COMMUNICATION MODEL OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

AUTHORITY

Institutional — Bureaucratic

OPENNESS — SECRECY

Charismatic — Pragmatic

INFLUENCE

According to Denton, the Institutional orientation to power is based on a conservative approach to presidential power. It is based on the legalistic-constitional definitions of the powers of the president. An institutional approach ignores the persuasive, interpersonal bargaining skills of a president. The world is viewed in terms of "right" and "wrong," and the president works in a "management mode."[22] The Bureaucratic orientation to power is based "on legitimate authority but generally surrounded by secrecy"[23] Presidents use their bargaining skills to their best advantage. Both physical (hierarchial) force and psychological force are used to persuade.[24] The pragmatic orientation to power is an attempt to maximize power. The mode of operation is a cost-benefit analysis. The orientation is highly rational, but it does rely on persuasion and bargaining skills.[25] The Charismatic orientation to power is linked closely with a president's personality. Information control is not used as a tool for power. The president's interpersonal skills "create a sense of obligation and loyalty with individuals with whom the President interacts, foster unconscious identification with subordinates or ideas they profess, and create perceptions of dependence with those with whom he interacts."[26]

Denton does not view a president's orientation to power as being "static," for he believes that a leader's orientation to power is specific to the situation. Denton describes J.R. Ewing as being both "bureaucratic" and "pragmatic," while his brother, Bobby is "charismatic" and "institutional."[27] The collection of "orientations" that a president regularly uses is called a "political self."[28] Denton's work is useful here, for it clearly summarizes a great deal of the literature on presidential roles, and it does so from the standpoint of a symbolic

interactionist.

After reviewing the literature, it is possible to discern four presidential roles: the Leader; the Decision-maker; the Manager; and the Partisan. These "roles" vary to some degree from Denton's four orientations to power, because many of the findings of the other researchers do not cluster neatly around the openness-secrecy continuum. And in addition, historically presidential behaviors (or activities) would be difficult to explain solely by the interaction of the authority-influence and openness-secrecy continuums. For example, Denton maintains that the president who follows an institutional orientation to power does not take advantage of his interpersonal bargaining skills. However, a president with an institutional orientation to power just might not openly operate as a "wheeler-dealer." Rather, the president might choose to operate in a less overt manner. Part of being "regal" and "very presidential" is the ability to appear above politics but yet be a master of it.

Thus, the four roles that will be used here correspond roughly with Denton's: The Leader (Institutional); the Decision-Maker (Bureaucratic); the Manager (Pragmatic); and the Partisan (Charismatic).

1. The Leader is very presidential in behavior. He is above politics, &but yet he is also a master at the game, for he is deft politically. He is a moral exemplar. He is a man of conviction, and he articulates those convictions. He is assertive. He is a man of action. He is a creative, visionary.

2. The Decision-maker is issue-oriented. He is very practical and will compromise to get the job done. He cares for people, and he is one of the common men. He is middle America. He is honest, open, fair, and he is not tied to partisan interests.

3. The Manager believes in rational behavior in governmental decision-making. He tries to reduce subjectivity in the processes of government. He is knowledgeable, efficient, thorough, and hardworking.

4. The Partisan is linked to various interests. He advocates party positions, and he is not willing to compromise these positions. He is often granting and paying back political favors. He avoids scandals, but he rejects the moral exemplar role.

A president may be perceived as having qualities associated with all four role types. And a president may attempt to portray qualities associated with each of the four role types.[29]

When observers of the presidency try to "type" a particular president's leadership attributes, they observe his behavior. A president's "type" is "shaped by signs of patterns in the things he says and does. These are the words and actions he has chosen, day by day. His choices are the means by which he does what he can do to build his reputation as he wants it. Decisions are his building-blocks."[30]

A pubic's typing of a president is a highly kinetic, dynamic process.[31] A president's public character (dominant impression of him) is

constantly evolving, in flux with the political drama being staged. His public character must be attended to and protected from other actors and events threatening his power and prestige. The president can not control the other forces playing in the drama, but in order to be effective, the president must attempt to control the persona he brings to the drama.

The literature suggests that the leader protect his public character by being aware of his persona and managing its depiction. Most importantly, the president must avoid violations of type. A violation of type is "almost any public conduct that contradicts an image important to people."[32] Goffman uses the phrase "communication out of character" to describe a social act that is in contradiction to the public expectations of one's behavior.[33]

In order to avoid violations of type, a president must attend to his central role. A central role is the "thing for which people admire him or that they expect from him."[34] His central role is his ace in the hole in that it is the most stable of his roles. It is something which he can build his persona around. A president must discover what his central role is and then capitalize on it.

Additionally, the president must react to events consistently. The president when faced with a decision must make the decision within the expectational boundaries of his central role. The decision must be consistent with past decisions and a foundation for future decisions.

Consistent behavior in addition to aiding the president in his relationship with the public also aids him in his relationship with the mass media. For if the president is consistent, then it is easier to "stereotype" him. Stereotyping is "basically a process of definition based upon past experiences."[35] Stereotyping "enables the mass communicator to

frame his message with the least amount of loss motion, and it enables the receiver to comprehend what is being communicated with equal speed and facility."[36]

Some researchers have suggested that "much political power . . . appears to be derived and . . . maintained by the manner in which silence is used."[37] A strategic silence may be defined as a "refusal of a public figure to communicate verbally when that refusal (1) violates expectations (2) draws public attribution of fairly predictable meanings, and (3) seems intentional and directed at an audience."[38] However, by refusing to talk, the leader has left his actions open to interpretation. The "definition of those actions has been relinquished to the speculation of press and public, speculation that will find mystery, passivity, etc., in those situations."[39] Silences create uncertainty and tension. Thus, silence does not appear to be a very intelligent choice when a political leader is attempting to manage his persona.

In recapitulation, if a president knows his central role and guards it against type violations by portraying his persona consistently and meeting demands placed on it consistently, he may map out danger areas to avoid in order to protect himself. However, if a violation of type is unavoidable, it an inconsistency must be made, or if inactivity is a necessary behavior, then a leader must counteract this "threat" to his persona by deliberately seeking out behavior reinforcing his original persona or complementing his original persona. This is most crucial during the transition period, for it is here that a political leader evolves from a campaigner to the leader of the country. It is perhaps the supreme test; for the choices made there will reverberate throughout the remainder of his political career.[40]

Method

This study is based on a quantitative content analysis and a thematic analysis of presidential transition coverage by The New York Times, The Washington Post, Newsweek, and Time. The Reagan transition was from November 4, 1980 through January 20, 1981. The study is part of a larger research project conducted by the author.

The study sought to reveal the focus of attention of political actors and to reveal the attitudes of specific groups of political actors. In addition, the study sought to describe trends in communication content and to compare the transition news provided by the newspapers and news magazines.[41]

The transition period was approximately eleven weeks in length. Election Tuesday was chosen as the starting point for coding. Both Time and Newsweek are published weekly. Therefore it was expected that eleven weeks of each were to be examined. All political stories were surveyed for transition material (this includes political columnists). All transition material was coded. There were approximately 77 days of newspaper coverage for the transition period. As previously stated, Election Tuesday was chosen as the starting point for the coding. A systematic sampling scheme was designed for the newspapers. The number three was chosen as the increment by which the remainder of the transition days to be analyzed were selected. This sample size is well within the sampling range of reliability.[17] Front-page political articles (including jumps), articles hyped on the front-page, and articles located in the political and editorial section(s) of the newspapers were coded.

The recording unit represents a separate source (or origin) of the

news content. The president-elect, his transition chief, the newspaper reporter, and the leader of the opposition may all be discussing revenue sharing; however, four separate recording units must be coded in order to capture the different origins. There were eighteen possible source classifications. All like source-origins were coded together in one recording unit. For example, the president-elect may be quoted in several places within an article; however, all the quoted content would be coded under the source classification, "president-elect." The context unit then was the article or column. By using these two units of analysis as defined, it is possible to reconstruct the news article or column.[43] Eight hundred and ninty-two recording units were coded for the 1980-81 transition.

The four primary coding categories for the quantitative content analysis were developed from a content analysis of The Washington Post during the 1980-81 transition period. The four primary coding categories used were: the source of the recording unit (18 separate classifications); the political actor discussed (9 separate classifications); the substance of the recording unit (181 separate classifications); and the mode of the recording unit (three separate classifications).

The thematic analysis "looked at news with very general categories, deliberately constructed to abstract specific stories from their immediate contexts."[44] This method is designed to discover any possible significant factors found in the recording unit and context units that were untouched by the quantitative analysis. This analysis asks the question, "What is the theme or spine of the recording and context unit?" And, "How are these themes built upon each other?" In addition, a qualitative mode analysis was conducted. One direction was decided upon based upon the nature of the

theme (decided for the context unit, i.e., the article or column) without actually tabulating the neutral-positive-negative statements in the recording/context units.

Only one coder was used; therefore, inter-coder reliability tests were not applicable. However, an intra-coder reliability check was done. After each day's coding was completed, the coder drew three completed coding sheets haphazardly from the day's collection. The coder then attempted to re-code these story units. The following formula was used:

$$R = \frac{2\,Pab}{Pa + Pb}$$

where R is reliability, Pa is the number of observations of the first coding, Pb is the number of observations of the second coding, and Pab is the number of agreed upon observations. The reliability score did not fall below 93 percent for any recording unit. The trouble spots were identified early into the coding, and special care was given in considering these coding elements. Thus, many problems of coding reliability were avoided. The average reliability score for the coding process was 97 percent.

Findings

Mode Analysis

The 1980-81 transition was a party-overturn transition. For this reason, it was expected by most political watchers to be a rather

conflictual period. In addition, Reagan had unseated a setting president, and this added to the tension. However, on the contrary, the 1980-81 transition seems to have been a rather orderly process. The political opposition was unusually quiet. The partisan bickering characteristic of a campaign or of a legislative session had abated to a great degree. The only rough spots that did crop up centered primarily on foreign policy situations: the Iranian hostage situation and the civil war in El Salvador. Reagan made public statements about "future policy" that the Carter administration maintained hampered the "immediate policy." Generally, criticism if there was any at all, came from the media or unidentified sources quoted within the media articles or columns. The exception to this was when the president-elect was involved in an internal party struggle among his own party members. Reagan ran up against the very vocal New Right during the Cabinet selection process.

For the most part, context units were neutral in tone (see Table 1). There were more negative stories than positive stories, however. And, the news magazines provided more negative coverage than did the newspapers.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Interpretation of Election Results

The coverage of the "election results" or the president-elect's "electoral mandate" is very important. For it is this coverage that sets the parameters of the possible. In other words, "what can the president-elect realistically expect to accomplish? How far can he or she go? What are the political dimensions within which he or she has to operate?"

Again, it is the transition coverage that sets the expectations for Washington elites and the general public in terms of the "parameters of the possible."

The coverage of the "Reagan mandate" had two main themes. The election was viewed either as: a "repudiation" of Carter; or as a conservative mandate or revolution. Reagan had won a 44 state, 8 million-votes-victory, but the interpretation of that win varied.[45] Newsweek seemed to discount the size of the Reagan victory. The magazine reported that the Reagan mandate "was clouded by the suspicion that the difference most wanted was to be rid of Jimmy Carter."[46] The magazine quoted Historian Richard Wade as saying that: "this is no big cosmic thing. Carter was a lousy President."[47] Yet at other times, the Newsweek articles saw the election as a "counter-revolution" that "shredded the old Democratic coaliton."[48] The election would make "the Republicans custodians of the American future for the rest of this century."[49] David Broder of the The Washington Post viewed the election as an ideological revolution. Broder wrote:

> You had to be dense to miss the message of Reagan's campaign: a flat-out repudiation of basic economic, diplomatic and social policies of the reigning Democratic liberalism.
>
> They were reacting to the decline of living standards, the squeeze of inflation and interest rates. And the frustration of American power abroad, as symbolized by the Iranian hostage ordeal. In some instances they were also protesting the changes in social customs, life styles and community standards condoned or encouraged by liberal

legislatures and judges--the issues of the Moral Majority.[50]

Roger Rosenblatt of Time agreed that the mandate was specific--there would be a new beginning, a conservative beginning. However Rosenblatt predicted that the presidency would not become "a national pulpit for Jerry Falwell's lethal sweet talk."[51] Rosenblatt writes:

> That mandate is specific: to control inflation, to reduce unnecessary governmental interference in private lives and in business, to reassert America's prominence in the world. That is all there is to it, and that is plenty. The mandate does not necessarily include far-right hit lists, censorship, the absence of gun control, prayer in schools and a constitutional amendment banning abortion. These things are significant if problematical, but they do not represent majority wishes.[52]

Coverage of Reagan-the-man

In recent years, researchers have suggested that the number of personality images in the press far outweigh the number of issues presented.[53] Graber somewhat tempered this in 1971, when she found that while images were mentioned more frequently than issues, it was not in "landslide proportions." the ratio which she found was 44 percent issues to 56 percent images.[54] This study found that the ratio of personality images to issues was: 12 percent to 88 percent for The Washington Post; 7 percent to 93 percent for The New York Times; 17 percent to 83 percent

for Newsweek; and, 22 percent to 78 percent for Time. However, this may be misleading. For, the issues were couched in "personalistic encapsulations."[55] Issues were associated with leaders, and in many ways, the issues and the political personality merged as one. Issues were shaped and defined by the individual. Individual politicians whether cast as heroes or villains are pictured as shaping the political realities of our time. Similarly, Barber has suggested that the most common developing news story is one of "action-reaction," i.e., political man interacting with political man.[56] Issues were viewed most oftenly as conflicts between individuals. During the transition, these "conflicts" were often between the president and the president-elect, between members of the president-elect's staff, and between members of the campaign organization and the transition organization. Like the Gans study and the Tuchman study, it was found that political leaders were often pictured as being in combat with reified social and economic forces.[57]

The image of Reagan-the-man proved to be an interesting one. The Washington Post and Newsweek emphasized Ronald Reagan--the actor and Ronald Reagan--the cowboy. Both of these images prove to be rather negative in orientation. The actor image suggests that Reagan is in some ways fake or false. The cowboy image calls to mind a jingoistic crusader who rides around on horseback spreading "his limited view of the world."

Newsweek describes Reagan's career:

> Once he was the most underestimated man in American politics--a washed-up movie star, it was said, who was too old, too simple, and too far right to be president.[58]

According to the news magazine, Ronald Reagan was "the ultimate media-age politician--a man who apprentices for his calling in a quarter century as a movie and television performer."[59] When Reagan arrived in Washington, the headlines in Newsweek said: "Mr. Reagan goes to Washington."[60] The take off on the old movie "Mr. Smith goes to Washington" is obvious, but the play off the Jimmy Stewart-Ronald Reagan image is more subtle. Both men share the homespun, gosh-golly, good ol' boy Americana that made them successful in the early movies.

Similarly, Lou Cannon of The Washington Post reports on the victory press conference:

> It was appropriately enough, like opening night at the theater, an opening night when a new show is in town featuring an experienced actor in an unfamiliar role.
>
> The show was 'President Reagan.' It opened under bright lights in the ballroom of the Century Plaza Hotel to good notices and the whispered undercurrent of excitement that attends first nights.
>
> Reagan is, above all, a performer, and he was playing a role today he had auditioned for 12 years. He knew what to do.[61]

Haynes Johnson of The Washington Post wrote that America would now have "the Presidency performed in the Stanislavsky method."[62]

Time also used the actor-theme, but it was not quite so negatively used. Time's depiction of Reagan, the man, is best illustrated by this Rosenblatt quote:

> If one were to take all of Reagan's qualities--the detachment, the self-knowledge, the great voice and good looks--and project them into the White House, he would have a first-class B-movie presidency. That is no insult. The best B movies, while not artistically, are often the ones that move us most because they move us directly, through straightforward characters, simple moral conflicts and idealized talk.[63]

Certainly, Time was not positive in its depiction of Reagan, but yet the coverage was not as condescending as The Washington Post's and Newsweek's. An example of this attitude is found in this passage from The Washington Post:

> Ronald Reagan, California's Cowboy Capitalist, is galloping toward Washington, promising to reign in America's bucking economy, coral inflation, and put a cattle prod to sagging productivity.[64]

The New York Times did not appear to concentrate on Ronald Reagan-the man. Instead, the newspaper concentrated on the transition activities, particularly the problems of the transition.

Issue Agenda

The issue agenda differs considerably from what a casual observer might expect from the Reagan campaign rhetoric. Pro-president-elect sources stressed government organizational philosophy and problems and economic policy and problems (see Table 2). Surprisingly, social problems

such as busing, equal rights, abortion, gay rights, etc., were virtually ignored. Reagan was moving front and center. The rhetoric of the "new morality" was changing to the rhetoric of "governing." Newsweek predicted that Reagan would work to "broaden his one-fourth electoral base into an authentic national consensus, muting ideology, exuding sweet reason and discouraging impossible expectations."[65]

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

The New York Times, The Washington Post, and Time did not follow the Reagan's team's lead. Instead, the publications stressed foreign policy over economic policy. This may be explained in that foreign policy concerns were Reagan's Achilles heel during the campaign.[66]

Organizational and Operational Style

Reagan's operational manner and his organizational style during the transition reveal a great deal about the future Reagan presidency. Reagan was no political-newcomer, and after the election he immediately began healing wounds and building fences. Newsweek reported that Reagan:

> Shook hands and made up with Jimmy Carter, massaged the barons of both parties in both houses of Congress, supped white wine with the Justices of the Supreme Court, and swept the city's civic and cultural glitterati off their feet simply by paying attention to them.[67]

The Washington Post reported that Reagan wanted to touch all bases if possible, for he was aware "of the need for comity and copnfidence between the branches of Government and between the parties."[68]

The Reagan transition team focused on how power was to be organized. What was the most effective and efficient means of governing? For the Reagan transition team, the answer was cabinet government or a modified form of it known as executive committee government.

Reagan was to rule as a "chairman of the board" with the cabinet being the board of directors. Warner writes:

> The President-elect, who is famed for keeping reasonable hours and not getting bogged down in details, is expected to act pretty much like a chairman of the board who makes the big decisions but delegates the day-to-day operations to others. Thus the people Reagan brings to office are likely to have larger-than-usual roles in running the Government.[69]

Reagan's operating style had always been to delegate authority, and he planned to do so now.[70] Reagan wanted to rehabilitate "the Cabinet both as his interdisciplinary council of state and as his corps of emissaries to the departments--not theirs to him."[71] Secretary of Defense Weinberger said that:

> The Reagan Presidency will be more like the British Cabinet System. Reagan likes discussion, he likes to hear different viewpoints. The atmosphere will be collegial, with all the Cabinet officers participating in all policy discussions.[72]

Reagan himself said:

> We want to have lively debate and discussion. It's my belief that we do share a basic philosophy of government . . . . We may differ at how we arrive at the end result, but I want free and open discussion.[73]

Reagan appointed Edwin Meese as White House Counsel and gave him Cabinet RAnk. It would be Meese's job to "serve as a bridge between the Cabinet and the President."[74]

The concept of "cabinet government" eventually evolved into the concept of "executive committee government." Edwin Meese said that "the executive committee" would consist of "about six officials including Vice President Bush, the White House Chief of Staff, the Attorney General, and the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury."[75] According to Meese, "All other Cabinet Departments and major agencies would be clustered by function and report operating details to one or another executive Cabinet Secretary."[76] Time had a similar view:

> Reagan intends to govern largely through an executive committee, an 'inner circle' of six or so senior Cabinet officers, plus, on appropriate occasions, the directors of the CIA and Office of Management and Budget. The inner circle will meet with Reagan regularly to review the whole range of governmental problems and will be charged with making sure that his orders are carried out. Thus the people filling these posts--basically the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury and the Attorney General--must be capable of giving advice on a broad variety of subjects.[77]

Clearly Reagan's operational and organizational style during the transiton suggests the role traits of the "Decision-Maker." The decision-maker is practical, and he is willing to compromise. He is open, fair, willing to listen to alternative views. He operates from a prima inter pares approach like the British Cabinet System. He is the final decision-maker, but he shares his power with others.

Reagan's intended use of his Cabinet makes the selection process for arriving at such a cabinet and the criteria used to arrive at such a cabinet very important indeed. The qualifications of those who are chosen as well as of those who did the choosing are very important. Time writes that:

> The process by which Reagan is choosing his Cabinet is revealing of the man and his methods. He has entrusted the talent hunt to old friends with whom he feels comfortable and has given them a great deal of leeway.[78]

According to Newsweek:

> The inner circle that made most of the initial choices included Bush, chief of staff James Baker, CIA director-designate William J. Casey, appointments secretary Michael Deaver, head-hunter E. Pendleton James, Senator Paul Laxalt, Attorney General-designate William French Smith and most important--Chief Counselor Edwin Meese.[79]

Reagan said that he had one basic rule to follow in his Cabinet selections: "My basic rule is that I want people who don't want a job in

Government. I want people who are already so successful that they would regard a Government job as a step down, not a step up."[80] Time reported that the Reagan transition appointments committee had certain characteristics in mind for possible appointees: "In general, the group looked for the same qualities that might be found in the chief executive officer of a major corporation: proven competence, team work, experience, and toughness."[81]

But, the selection and recruitment process ran into problems early during the transition. The Reagan transition was the first to comply with the 1978 Ethics in Government Act. For this reason, the recruitment process proved to be a long and frustrating one. In addition even after some of the secretaries were named, attention was given to possible conflicts-of-interest in relation to Secretary of Labor-Designate Ray Donovan, Secretary of Interior-Designate James Watts, Secretary of the Treasury-Designate Donald Regan, and National Security Adviser-Designate Richard Allen.

However, the future cabinet members were usually described as "qualified" even if they were controversial.[82] Yet, there remained those who were unconvinced, namely, the New Right. The Reagan transition appointments committee had done quite a balancing act in filling Cabinet posts. It was a "balance between traditional Republican pragmatists and more ideological Reagan loyalists."[83] And that "delicate balance" was what angered the New Right. "The leaders of the ideological conservative movement perhaps the most loyal and longstanding supporters of President-elect Ronald Reagan in the country" were "seeing an awful specter floating around their former hero . . .: moderate Republicanism."[84] One new right leader told The New York Times:

> It's the names that keep popping up that bother us--Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, Alan Greenspan, Anne Armstrong. These people are symbolic. If one or two are in the Cabinet all right. But not all four.[85]

Jesse Helms called the future cabinet members "retreads."[86] And, Richard Viguerie complained that "it's the kind of Cabinet Jerry Ford or George Bush would have assembled. I'm sick to my stomach. Reagan gave all the winks and signals that he was going to be a true conservative, and turns his back on us."[87] Newsweek reported that Viguerie told their reporters that the Reverend Jerry Falwell, leader of the Moral Majority, hadn't "been able to get a phone call returned by the Reagan camp since the election."[88] Some said that it was only a "minor setback" for the New Right, but "the new right counted it more than that: the betrayal by Reagan of the cause for which people had soldiered in his crusades since 1966."[89]

Yet, Reagan did make some overtures to the New Right. He appointed Richard Williamson under Chief of Staff Baker as unofficial ambassador to the New Right."[90] And, "some of the new righteous did take heart at having Stockman at Reagan's court, preaching the gospel of the redemptive tax cut, and, some were pacified by Schweiker's opposition to abortion and school busing."[90]

According to The Washington Post, Reagan's maneuvering on the social issues should have been expected. The newspaper explained why:

> Moreover, the passion that truly motivates the New Right is a moral one that is magic with segments of the electorate but doesn't translate well into government policy. New Right leaders talk most

animatedly about restoring 'values' to American life in the form of required school prayer, a constitutional ban on abortions and getting sex out of the movies and television-- not reforms likely to be at the top of any president's list of things to do.[91]

Time concluded that: "Collectively, Reagan's choices announce louder than anything he has said that he intends to run a pragmatic Administration, one not bound by ideology, and the right wing is vocally dismayed."[92]

Impression Management During the Reagan Transition

The Decision-Maker

As mentioned previously, Reagan emphasized the "Decision-Maker" role traits (see Table 3). And it is this role, that is his "central role." Reagan's emphasis on "cabinet" or "executive committee" government portrays the Decision-Maker persona. Reagan's humble, good ol' boy political personality and his fatherly attitude places his operational style under the Decision-Maker persona. Reagan used "a collegial group" of friends to select his Cabinet and through compromise and negotiation, the group reached united decisions. This too illustrates the Decision-Maker persona. Reagan's moving towards the center also is a trait of the Decision-Maker Role type. For, the Decision-Maker is the president of all the people, so he can not allow himself to represent any one particular group to the exclusion of all others.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Even though Reagan presented his central role, the Decision-Maker clearly, without violations of type, he ran into difficulty. For, Reagan chose to withdraw from actively defining the situation after the election and returned to California. This was intended to nurture his power and to avoid committing himself to policy strategies. Sidey writes:

> While Reagan made two forays out of his Pacific redoubt to remind the world of his smile and desire to work with Congress and other powerful people, he has talked very little. The flow of commentary on appointees, world events and national issues that Presidents-elect in other times have been lured into has been avoided. His image is compressed and contained, drawn deliberately and somewhat vaguely as the power that is felt behind the stage, emerging only for the big bows. That protected position also helps reduce wear and tear on a President who truly intends to change directions.[93]

Losing Control Over the Persona

However, even though Reagan was successfully portraying himself as "the Decision-Maker," problems arose. For Reagan to be "chairman of the board" was fine, but for Reagan to be the "continually vacationing chairman of the board" was quite another story. He was described as "remote," "detached," and "aloof." Newsweek wrote that Reagan was "remarkably detached from the process."[94] The Washington Post reported that:

> No one suggests that Reagan isn't making decisions, but he has chosen to let the preliminary decision-making process be conducted in Washington and by conference telephone calls rather than in his presence.[95]

"To others, Reagan's detachment was a harbinger of his Presidency, a willingness to delegate nearly everything and a reluctance to wrestle with the details of governing."[96] Sidey reports the tension of the situation: "Reagan has just met for the first time some of the people he named to his Cabinet. Those who believe that a President-elect should eat, talk and pray with his CaAbinet nominees were stunned."[97] Newsweek reports that:

> The unexpectedly hard work of Cabinet-making tinged Reagan's honeymoon with its first sour notices, less for the quality of his choices than for the slowness and bumpiness of the process and for Reagan's air of long-distance disengagement from it.[98]

Tongue in cheek, Rosenblatt of Time wrote that: "On January 20, Reagan and the idea he embodies will both emerge from their respective seclusions with a real opportunity to change the direction and tone of the nation."[99] Sidey pinpoints the dangerous game that Reagan and his transition team were playing:

> In reality a detached presidency puts decisions in the hands of everyone else. No harm is done when the issues are trivial, but as the piecemeal nature of the Cabinet appointments have demonstrated, relying so totally on advisers is a dangerous game.[100]

An Adaptation Strategy

The Reagan transition team began responding to such criticism: first, by aides rushing to his defense, and secondly, by Reagan himself entering the arena. Aides described Reagan as being "very much in command even if not on the spot."[101] Counselor Edwin Meese told reporters: "He is taking a very active role. He is totally cognizant of all the things that are happening . . .on the phone with us . . .reading the memoranda . . . . Obviously, he's making all the decisions."[102] Lyn Nofziger assured reporters that Reagan was "in constant contact with Meese and others."[103] Transition aide Holmes told reporters: "He is making decisions and he has made the decisions."[104] Nofziger assured reporters: "Make no mistake, the Cabinet will be Ronald Reagan's Cabinet and they will be there because he wants them there."[105] Reagan himself decided to give Newsweek an interview for the December 20, 1980 issue. And he spoke to this question of "detachment:"

> The whole business of Cabinet selection and so forth goes on with me here . . . Most of it is phone work or personal visits and staff meetings that are held here. Then there is an awful lot of reading to be done.[106]

Reagan's venturing out for the Newsweek interview and all of his aides' protests that he was "the Leader" mark clearly an adaptation stage of the Reagan transition team. Around December 4, 1980, the media began questioning Reagan's absence, and by the end of December, the media were stepping up their criticism of his absence. The Reagan team responded

intermittently to these charges; however, by the end of December, it was clear that they were on the warpath against such an image of "the detached Reagan." The team began an adaptation strategy. The "Decision-Maker" unfortunately labeled as the "continually vacationing chairman of the board" had to be complemented with an active, assertive, leadership role, i.e., The Leader.

In those last weeks of December, Reagan became no longer the passive overseer but rather a dynamic gladiator. He was often quoted, and his very language changed. "By God, if that's what it takes, we'll do it" is a statement that best typifies the new Reagan.[107] "Reagan spoke of his determination not only to provide better management, but also to change the direction of Government."[108] Reagan became the visionary, the leader. He said: "We do have a rendezvous with destiny . . . . There is a divine plan that created this nation and put us here for the service of mankind."[109] His trips to Washington became more frequent, more visible, and more vocal.

From Tables 2 and 3, it is clear that there existed a greater similarity between pro-sources and media-sources in terms of issues mentioned rather than for role traits mentioned. This illustrates the problem that the new administration had in maintaining control over the Reagan persona.

When the distribution of raw scores was examined over the eleven week period, the adaptive strategy of the Reagan transition team and the media's response to it can be examined. In The Washington Post, 79 percent of all pro-source mentions of "The Leader" occur after December 1, 1980 in response to the media's criticism of Reagan's detachment from the transition. In The New York Times, 76 percent of all "The Leader" mentions occur after December 1, 1980. In Time, 89 percent of all "The Leader"

mentions occur after December 1, 1980. But, in Newsweek only 14 percent of all "The Leader" mentions occur after December 1, 1980. Clearly, Newsweek did not accept the transition team's adaptation image.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that Reagan was generally sucessful in "defining the situation" for the news media. For Reagan avoided violations of type and remained consistent in his presentation of his persona. This allows the mass media to easily "stereotype" his behavior and avoid the "fishing around," "armchair guessing" that is often present during transition periods. Reagan presented a clear "Decision-Maker" persona; however, the persona became somewhat of a charicature when it evolved from "the chairman of the board" to "the continually vacationing chairman of the board." Reporters began to create negative stereotypes based on this vacationing chairman persona. Thus, Reagan was beginning to lose control over his own political persona. However, once the criticism became pronounced, the Reagan transition team regrouped and began to complement the central role of "The Decision-Maker" with the active "Leader" role. This adaptation proved successful in fending off the unwanted vacationing chairman persona (with the exception of Newsweek). Clearly, the Reagan team made a mistake in following the theory of silence and withdrawing from active participation in the Washington scence; however, the team was able to counteract the resulting charicature successfully by attending to the media, devising an adaptive strategy, and pursuing the complementary "Leader" role. Thus, Reagan was successful in protecting his public character by being aware of his persona and by

managing its depiction. On this ultimately, depends his success in the drama known as politics.

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TABLE 1

Qualitative Mode Analysis

	Percent			
Mode	The Washington Post	The New York Times	Newsweek	Time
Neutral	50	54	54	58
Positive	23	18	10	11
Negative	27	29	36	31
TOTAL	100%	101%	100%	100%

NOTE: Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Issue Categories Mentioned:

Pro and Media-Sources

	The Washington Post		The New York Times		Newsweek		Time	
Issue Categories	Percent Pro Sources	Percent Media Sources	Percent Pro Sources	Percent Media Sources	Percent Pro Sources	Percent Media Sources	Percent Pro Sources	Percent Media Sources
Economic Problems	20.9	15.3	19.7	15	11.8	18.7	17.9	15.5
General Governmental Problems and Philosophy	43.8	46.5	44.8	46	70.1	46.4	55.8	53.6
Foreign Policy	16.9	17.8	16.3	17.6	0	15.7	20.0	22.7
Social Problems	3.5	7.0	3.9	6.6	2.9	8.3	2.1	8.2
General Public and Mass Media Relations	14.9	13.4	15.3	14.8	14.7	10.9	4.2	0
TOTAL	100.0	99.8	100.0	100.0	99.5	100.0	100.0	100.0

NOTE: Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth.

TABLE 3

Percentage of Leadership Roles Mentioned

Role Categories	The Washington Post	The New York Times	Newsweek	Time
Leader	47.5	58.7	42.3	38.8
Decision-Maker	37.5	32.6	46.5	53.1
Manager	5.0	2.2	9.9	4.1
Partisan	10.0	6.5	1.4	4.1
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.1

NOTE: Percentages rounded to the nearest tenth.